
Etiquette and Dining Tips for The New Trans Woman

Are you really nervous about going out to eat en femme? Know you're not alone, this is an important right of TG passage, and all "new women" have these normal concerns. I often see very well groomed TG women who have spent endless hours on perfecting their makeup and clothing, revert back to their male conditioned habits, when the food arrives.

Etiquette is an extremely important aspect of being a lady, so next time-- think about how you're being perceived by others before you begin chowing down while you're beautifully dressed.

Here are some helpful dinning tips to consider before your next luncheon or dinner.

Check out the restaurant ahead of time. That way you'll know exactly what's on the menu what you might want to order, what other women are wearing and where the rest rooms are located.

Always take your coat off when entering, and carry your coat and handbag to the table. Spread your coat open and lay it across the chair (sitting on the inside of the coat) placing the collar over the back of the chair. Place a small handbag next to you in your chair, or a larger one beside your foot. Please don't hang your coat over the back of the chair, and don't leave your purse on the table or on the floor where others could trip on it.

Be polite. Make an effort to speak softly and say "please" and "thank you" to your server as well as to your host and call them by name. Smile! A smile is an important part of being a woman. Always tip well, so you are welcome to return the next time you are dressed and want a safe place where you feel welcome.

Are you not sure what utensil to use? My mother taught me an easy way to remember what to use when. Start at the outside and work your way in. Your salad fork will be on the far left; your entree fork will be next to it. Your dessert spoon and fork will be above your plate.

Generally, liquids are on your right, solids on your left. For example, your water glass will be on the right and your bread plate will be on the left.

The very first thing you do, once everyone is seated is put your napkin on your lap.

Remember what your mother spent years telling you - keep your elbows off the table, sit up straight and don't talk with your mouth full!

Slow down, men generally eat very fast. I recommend you eat a small snack before you go out and always stop fluids 2 hours before leaving.

Keep your voice soft. Set your utensil down between bites.

Pat (don't wipe) your mouth with your napkin. Use a straw for your cold beverage.

If you need to, apply lipstick only at the table; do not apply other makeup. Excuse yourself to go the ladies room for makeup touch-up and hair. Ladies, always and get in and out of the ladies room as quickly as possible. Limit your conversation in the restroom. Please realize women wash and dry their hands!

During the Meal:

Don't order messy food - pasta with lots of sauce, chicken with bones, ribs, big sandwiches, large portions and whole lobsters are all dangerous. Try food a woman would order, such as a salad.

Do order food that is easy to cut into bite-size pieces. Ladies always leave some food on their plate!

The polite way to eat soup is dip your spoon away. There's less chance of spilling in your lap that way too!

Break your dinner roll or bread into small pieces and eat a piece at a time.

If you need to leave the table, put your napkin on the seat or the arm of your chair.

When you've finished eating, move your knife and fork to the "four o'clock" position so the server knows you're done.

Remember to try and relax, listen, and participate in the conversation. Females are very animated listeners. Smile! You can always ask your dinner guest questions as this avoids bringing up the subject of your own transgendered expression and feeling the need to always discuss it.

If you take your cell phone, leave it off unless you have Caller ID or the caller is expecting a woman to answer. It could be embarrassing having to speak using a male voice.

Alcohol:

It's wise not to drink more than a glass of wine while out in your new femme role. Passing effectively while out is touch enough without adding alcohol to the mix. Also, if you will be driving you will enjoy the evening more if you don't stress about being pulled over-- while en femme.

After the Meal:

Put your napkin on the table next to your plate.

Realize many TG women forget their social graces when they are nervous and when they're hungry. Again, please remember to eat slowly, with your mouth closed, while taking small bites. You may be able to speak with your mouth full-with your guy friends- but not so when dressed.

If a lady must smoke, she should be considerate of the feelings and needs of those around her.

Think of female conversation to have during and after dinner.

If you're eating alone. Have cash to pay for your dinner. Unless you have female ID and credit cards. (You might have to show your ID with a credit card). If eating with a gentleman, women can share in the cost of the meal, depending upon the circumstances. Women eating together will generally pay for what each of them has ordered, and most often will not split the bill, as men generally do.

Put your coat on at the door, not at the table. Find your keys and place your purse into position before stepping outside.

Walking, gesturing, sitting and rising from your chair correctly will top off the perfect dining experience. While passing is important; if you're a kind and interesting person who dresses with integrity and respect, you'll be accepted in most circumstances. Don't expect perfection the first time out, even the most refined lady might slip now and then. And remember-have fun and enjoy your dining experience.

Bon Appétit!

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